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241 177 ing than informative. However they may have been acquired, there is a fair range of food products at the disposal of the Orokaiva. The most essential of them have been his since time immemorial; those that he has acquired—either directly or through the agency of the mountain folk—from Europeans serve only to garnish his table. The most important among them are maize—which is a favourite though not grown in great quantity—some varieties of sweet banana, pineapples, and pumpkins. The last mentioned, although grown very commonly, are not really liked: villagers are always anxious to sell them to the white man. An informant once interrupted a conversation to remark that melons, tomatoes, 'pummerkins', and the rest of them, were all humbug; why did not the Government leave the New Guinea men to plant taro, yams, bananas, and sugar-cane, their proper food? It is fortunate that such an extreme view is not often met with; but the Government is prepared to expect a conservative opposition to nearly every new product which it seeks to encourage. It can only be said, very obviously, that, to be spontaneously successful, a new product must, in the primitive condition of native horticulture, be grown with a minimum of effort, and must happen to make an appeal to native taste. Otherwise, as in the case of the new experiment, rice, the work must be compulsory.

4. *The Land System*

423 618 Before we can fully understand the system of using the land, it is necessary to describe the system under which it is owned. Among the Orokaiva there is a multiplicity of small clans, which from time to time increases by subdivision (a process which is in part neutralized by the dying out of older clans). Now the land is owned in reality by the clan. The fact that very commonly the clan is a local unity, being often coincident with the single village, makes this system a simple one in the normal instance. Sometimes, however, the clan is somewhat

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scattered, occupying several villages or parts of several villages. In this case the clan will in all probability retain a nominal ownership of all its lands; but in practice it is customary for the various sections to assume by general consent or else by the allocation of a headman, the occupation and usage of particular parts of the land. In due time the section is likely to adopt a distinctive name, and to develop into an independent clan: the right of usage tacitly becomes ownership, and we find the normal condition restored, viz. the clan locally unified and in possession of its own tracts of land. A system exactly similar governs the ownership of the small waterways (useful for fishing) and of the sago swamps.

The Orokaiva clan is virtually a patriarchal group; there is no real chieftainship, but a recognized ascendancy of the old man, provided his vigour of mind and body is equal to his position. As it begins to fail his place is gradually occupied by a younger man. Only in the larger clans, where there are well-defined family groups, does the question of hereditary succession appear, and then it is a somewhat faint appearance.

It is sometimes said that the chief owns the land, though this is hardly more than a form of speech. He does something, however, towards administering it. For instance, he can say which area is to be laid under cultivation at any time, and he can subdivide and allot the territory of the clan among its branches. He feels himself and is felt to be the guardian of the land. Thus we hear an old man telling how his father had given him death-bed injunctions —'Friday he talk, Saturday he die,' as the interpreter put it in order to make clear the testamentary nature of the charge—to allow all his own people to make their gardens on the clan's territory, but to suffer no strangers.

Among the members of the clan there is a very considerable amount of personal freedom, and, except in so far as there may be an allocation of land and fishing rights between branches or families, they may in theory make their gardens where they please. There is occasional

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423 618 wrangling as to garden boundaries, but these petty disagreements within the clan, so to speak, are as a rule easily settled. The land disputes which bring endless trouble and labour to the magistrate are disputes between clans. While the land is owned communally the garden is owned individually. Between two adjacent gardens the boundary is made of felled trees, laid end to end, sometimes in two rows so as to form a path between. So long as this ground is under cultivation, not only the produce of the garden but the garden itself is individual property, and a displacement of the boundary would mean a quarrel.

I may now describe the system by which the land is used: it may be called a Rotation of Areas. Each clan will possess a number of tracts of land, which bear locality names. These may or may not be contiguous. Often, owing to migratory habits or to the reclamation of some distant and hitherto unoccupied block of land, they may be somewhat scattered.

A diagram of the areas about Korisata, an Aiga village, though quite inaccurate as to their relative sizes, will serve as illustration. In extent these areas differ greatly, some being measured by acres, some by miles. The boundaries, not obvious to European eyes, are tracks, swamps, creeks, clumps of palms, and so forth. At any one time the village gardens will probably be found in one large clearing, mostly abutting upon one another.

311 241 As the gardeners use up the taro in their old gardens, so from time to time they extend the clearing and plant afresh. Never in the Northern Division, as far as I know, do they immediately plant a second time on the same ground. Thus the gardens gradually extend, or rather progress over a whole 'area', the abandoned parts quickly clothing themselves in a rank luxuriant growth of grass, bushes, and young saplings. When one of the 'areas' has been used up in this manner—and where it is an extensive one this may not be for two or three years—the clan will make a fresh beginning on another

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311 241 area; when this is in turn used up, on a third, and so on. By the time all the cultivable areas have been utilized in succession, and a return is made to the first, it is not unlikely that fifteen or twenty years have elapsed. Sometimes, indeed, this intervening period is still longer: I have talked to a man, of say thirty-five years, felling timber along the edge of an existent clearing, at no great distance from the village. He was virtually the headman of his clan and a more than usually reliable informant. He told me that within his time the clan had never before used that particular ground for gardens. His elder brother, however, remembered when the gardens had been there: he was rather decrepit and perhaps fifty.

311 241 618 By way of definitely illustrating this system I may refer to the areas belonging to the Clan Serugahije (which numbers thirteen men, supporting ten women and twenty children). The areas are:

1. Manigausi.
2. Babari.
3. Simbiri Beari.
4. Kimeneda.
5. Ususu.
6. Hasita.

The last to be abandoned was Manigausi, which, when I made a note of it, was already thickly covered with low scrub; all the present gardens were in the area Babari, which was still unexhausted; and the one marked down for the next attack was Simbiri Beari.

621 311 241 One of the larger villages (in which at least two clans were represented) enumerated seventeen areas, ten of which were apparently under virgin forest and used for hunting and fishing alone.

241 423 When the gardener finds himself clearing once more on the familiar ground which was used perhaps many years before, he does not necessarily plant on the precise spot which was his previously. There is, as a rule, so much ground to spare that he is welcome to begin where he pleases, and without the risk of offending a fellow clansman. It does sometimes happen, however, that a man acquires a sort of prescriptive right to the imme-

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diate locality where he has worked, and accordingly we sometimes find an easy-going division of an area between families or branches of the clan. No doubt this becomes a stricter division where the available land is circumscribed; for individual ownership of land probably has its origin in scarcity of land.

The examples I have given come from the Aiga tribe, between the middle Opi and Kumusi rivers, where there is no practical limit to cultivable soil, and where, indeed, there still remains a good deal of apparently virgin forest. On the foot-hill country in the south of the Division, where the population is often denser, and in particular on the Buna plains, where the *kurokuro* grass has encroached on the bush to so serious an extent, the same system indeed prevails, but the intervening periods must be shortened.

As will readily be imagined, this system tends to bring about a shifting, almost nomadic, style of horticulture. Sometimes the area is at no small distance from the permanent village. Then we shall find families living for weeks at a time in their garden houses, while their more regular but scarcely superior dwellings in the village stand deserted, with a mat fastened across the doorway. The gardener may plant coco-nuts and betel on the site of his temporary lodging: this is the first step towards the establishment of a new village. By the time that ground comes to be cleared and planted again, these palms will have grown to a good size, and it is very natural, with a people so perpetually given to clan disintegration, that some families should settle permanently on the site of their distant gardens. This, in my opinion, is the ordinary reason for the simultaneous birth of a new village and a new clan.

5. *Clearing and Deforestation*

One was at first tempted to believe that this Rotation of Areas, with such long intervening periods, was devised like the fallow in the interest of fertility. The

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be somewhat later in starting work, but they do their share. There are very few slackers in an Orokaiva village. As has been indicated, there is no effective division of labour in the garden save that between the sexes, and, to a less extent, that between old and young. There are incipient traces of trades and special vocations among the Orokaiva, but in gardening there is virtually no such differentiation. Every man, unless he be aged or a cripple, has his own garden, and he and his wife and children support themselves.

Sometimes the whole clan will co-operate. This is seen especially when a move is made and work begun on a new area. Sometimes by invitation another village will come to assist in these initial operations. This is the nearest approach that the Orokaiva makes to the African working bee. Passing at noon through the village of Ohoraburari—so named because the 'dance of the rooster' was once performed there—we see the women already busy, and a great array of black pots on the fires. A little farther and we come to the new garden clearing, where we find at work the whole population, men and women, of a neighbouring village, Totoimaburari, 'the dance of Totoima', the legendary mankiller. Working with them are a few of the Ohoraburari people—such as are not more interested in helping prepare the feast for their paying guests.

The work proceeds steadily, but with little system. There is nothing like a drive, or a rank of men moving forward and working abreast; but rather a number of scattered individuals, engaged in a somewhat aimless and leisurely kind of dibbling. On the edge of the garden is a platform, shoulder high, with a miniature ladder from the ground. This is the *harau*, or *ba gaga*, the platform on which offerings are set for the spirits of the dead, who govern the taro crop; and the ladder is intended in some manner to facilitate their access to the offerings. On this occasion the *harau* is hung about with tufts of the brilliant feathers which make up the Orokaiva head-

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of it will reside in the present system of an *extensive* and extravagant use of the land by its native owners. Apart from the other advantages which should attend a more *intensive* cultivation, it should make available great areas of land (if they are required) for European enterprise. Lastly, the Rotation of Areas is indirectly responsible for the deforestation of the north. This question has been discussed already (pp. 131–3). We have seen that the spread of the grass lands is due proximately to the negligence of the natives, but it is the fact that the scene of their labours is constantly changing that makes the expansion of the grass plains a serious problem.

Apart from these economic drawbacks the system which I have described exercises a moral or social influence which seems directly inimical to progress. The tendency of the Orokaiva (and of many other peoples in Papua) to subdivide and scatter has caused the magistrate continual anxiety and trouble; and the undesirability of this habit has long been recognized. As the Native Regulation expresses it,

> 'The practice of people abandoning their old homes in settled villages and scattering themselves in small groups over the face of the country is growing in the land. Experience proves that this isolated way of living tends to breed animosities, and increase superstitious fears and to debase those that follow it.'[1]

In pre-Government days, if the natives are to be believed, the villages were very commonly larger than they are at present. Tribal enmities and the constant fear of raiders made it necessary for the members of the clan to cluster together for mutual protection. But with the advent of Government control this fear has passed away. The individual clan or even family feels secure from attack however isolated it may be. Consequently we find a growing tendency for the small group to form an independent settlement. I have already referred to this matter (p. 129) but a repetition may be pardoned.

[1] Native Regulations, 1922, No. 90.

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My own observations lead me to believe that the commonest way for such an independent settlement to come into being is for a few related families, or sometimes a single family, to form a temporary settlement or camp on the distant site of the garden. In the very simple organization of the Orokaiva the family group is self-sufficing. There is no economic necessity for cohesion between family groups, and to avoid the trouble of coming and going the temporary settlement is easily converted into a permanent one on the spot where its supplies are found. Thus it will appear that the habit of making gardens on distant sites, and of changing these sites from time to time, tends to encourage a shifting, semi-nomadic kind of horticulture. There can be little doubt that the Rotation of Areas system is one of the most potent causes of village and clan disintegration.

(*b*) *Intensive Culture and Closer Settlement.* The remedy for these negative and positive evils lies, I believe, in a more intensive culture and in the closer settlement which would accompany it. Instead of a wide area of forest with here and there a patch titillated into temporary productiveness and then overwhelmed by the tropical bush or sometimes subjugated by the ever-advancing long grass, we might hope to see a continuous tract of land, a garden settlement, which, if not kept under continuous cultivation, might still be kept under human control. Such may be a very distant ideal, but I believe the advantages which would come of its realization may be expressed in more general terms than those of mere gardening.

It has been affirmed often enough that various civilizations have been based upon various kinds of agriculture, or even upon the cultivation of particular products; as for instance those of Egypt upon corn, of Mexico and Peru upon maize, even that of Uganda upon the banana. Such statements are perhaps more plausible than really demonstrable: they are usually backed up less by facts than by inferences. However, it may well be that